the ACTION reporter

American Council To Improve Our Neighborhoods

Volume II, No. 1 September, 1957

35 Experts Set for N.Y. Clinic Sept. 23-24

With some 35 experts already lined up — to lead workshop discussions and answer questions, as well as to deliver addresses — plans are nearing completion for ACTION's Eastern Regional Urban Renewal Clinic in New York's Hotel Roosevelt September 23-24.

Expanding the "what-to-do" and "how-to-do-it" pattern of earlier clinics, the meeting will assist local officials and leaders in business, civic affairs, health and welfare organizations, and community improvement groups in gaining practical knowledge in the growing nationwide urban renewal movement.

William Zeckendorf, president, Webb & Knapp, a member of ACTION's Board, is to be host at a reception for those attending the Clinic. The reception will be at 5:30 P.M. Sept. 23 in the Webb & Knapp offices, 383 Madison Avenue.

Some 500 persons, from cities and towns in 14 Eastern states and the District of Columbia, are expected at general sessions and 10 workshops, exchanging ideas, pooling experiences, and questioning experts ACTION is assembling.

First session — at 4 P.M. Sept. 23 — is titled "The ABC's of Urban Renewal" and will be geared to the communities initiating urban renewal programs. At the other general sessions, including a banquet opening night and a luncheon the second day, addresses are scheduled by James C. Downs, Jr., former Housing and Redevelopment Coordinator, Chicago, a member of ACTION's Board; Mayor Richard C. Lee, New Haven, Conn.; James W. Rouse, head of the Baltimore mortgage banking firm bearing his name, also an ACTION Board member, and James C. Felt, chairman, New York City Planning Commission.

Emphasis in the workshops will be on financing and expediting local programs, citizen support, and human problems. In addition to top Federal housing agency personnel — HHFA, FHA, URA — experts will include:

James H. Scheuer, co-sponsor, First National Capitol Redevelopment Corp., Washington, D. C.; Oliver Winston, director, Baltimore Urban Renewal and Housing Agency; Hugh Mields, Jr., assistant director for Federal activities, American Municipal Association, Washington, D. C.; Lawrence M. Cox, executive director, Norfolk (Va.) Redevelopment and Housing Authority; Thomas P. Coogan, president, Housing Securities, Inc., New York, ACTION director and director, National Association of Home Builders; Donald P. Graham, planning administrator, Boston City Planning Board; Elmer Lux, president, Buffalo (N. Y.) Redevelopment Foundation; Bayless Manning, professor, Yale University Law School; Guy T. O. Hollyday, president, Fight Blight, Inc.,

(See "Clinics," page 2)

James Felt

James W. Rouse

Mayor Richard C. Lee

James C. Downs, Jr.

Major addresses at ACTION's Eastern Urban Renewal Clinic in New York's Hotel Roosevelt September 23-24 will be delivered by these four men. Mr. Felt is chairman of the New York City Planning Commission. Mr. Downs, former Housing and Redevelopment Coordinator for the City of Chicago, is chairman of the Real Estate Research Corp. Mayor Lee heads the municipal administration in New Haven, Conn., and Mr. Rouse is president of James W. Rouse and Company, Inc., in Baltimore, and was a member of President Eisenhower's advisory committee on housing.

Government Reports Record Urban Renewal Progress In Fiscal 1957

For first-hand information on how ACTION clinics operate, Norris Nash, chairman, Citizen's Committee for Urban Renewal, Oakland, Calif., who heads a committee working with ACTION on arrangements for the Pacific Coast Clinic in Berkeley's Hotel Claremont October 17-18, will attend the Eastern Clinic and serve as one of the consultants.

Washington — Greatest overall progress in the history of Federally-assisted urban renewal — double that of 1956 — was recorded in fiscal 1957, according to Urban Renewal Commissioner Richard L. Steiner. He reported.

Projects approved for execution increased from 27 in 1956 to 56 in 1957. Loan contracts authorized rose from $67 million in '56 to $173.2 million in '57. Capital grant contracts authorized climbed from $40.5 million to $85.9 million. Capital grant disbursements reached a high of $31.2 million, more than twice the $13.6 million in 1956.

The demonstration grant program also showed a marked increase. There were 10 grants, totaling $800,000, for developing, testing and reporting slum prevention and elimination techniques, compared with 12 projects totaling $700,000 in the preceding two years.

URA's planning assistance program had 51 projects in 1957, as against 26 the year before. The $1.8 million in grants approved was about $1 million more than for 1956 projects and some $800,000 more than for 1955-56 combined.

"Clinic"

(Continued from page 1)

Baltimore, and a member of ACTION's Board; Arthur Rosfeld, public relations division, American Radiator and Standard Sanitary Corp., New York; Harry N. Osgood, director, urban program, Sears, Roebuck & Co., Chicago; Malcolm Burrows, acting executive director, Rehabilitation Land Agency, Washington, D. C.; William H. Ludlow, director of planning, Philadelphia Redevelopment Agency; Robert D. Sipprell, executive director, Buffalo Municipal Housing Authority; Morris B. Fleissig, urban renewal consultant, Candeub & Fleissig, Newark; John Connolly, director, Urban Renewal Agency, Cambridge, Mass.; T. Edward Temple, city manager, Danville, Va.; Don Moore, executive director, Operation Home Improvement Council, New York; William Nash, ACTION Research Analyst, Cambridge, Mass.; John Lange, executive director, National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials, Washington, D. C.; G. Yates Cook, director, Federal City Council, Washington, D. C.; Leonard Czarniecki, executive secretary, Committee for Neighborhood Conservation and Improved Housing, Detroit; Aaron Levine, executive director, Citizens' Council on City Planning, Philadelphia; Charles A. Phelan, Jr., executive director, American Planning & Civic Association, Washington, D. C.; Ira S. Robbins, executive director, Citizens' Housing and Planning Council, New York City; H. Gordon Sweet, executive director, Citizens Action Commission, New Haven, Conn., and Gaston L. Breckenridge, Rochester (N. Y.) Gas and Electric Company.

8th Bonus Mailing Sent Group Correspondents

ACTION now has 732 Group Correspondents, 31 more than in July. This month, these four publications are being sent to them:

"Fight Blight Fund, Inc.: Baltimore" — Report from ACTION #3. This 10-page booklet describes the plan bankers, realtors and businessmen in Baltimore use to loan money to "worthy" owner-occupants for houses in violation of city's housing code.

"The Churches and Urban Redevelopment" — A reprint of a symposium published in "The City Church" (May-June 1957), tackling questions connected with the role of churches in fighting urban decay.

"Community Relations in Action" — Reprint from "Gas News," publication of Peoples Gas Light & Coke Company, Chicago, tells of participation in neighborhood and community organizations by company personnel.

"The High Cost of Slums" — A four-page reprint from the Kiplinger Magazine "Changing Times," emphasizing how tax payers actually subsidize slums in their communities.

If your organization does not yet have a Group Correspondent, write ACTION for information.

ORGANIZATIONS IN RENEWAL

Below is another statement by a national organization whose activities bear on urban renewal, outlining its program, aims and resources available to local groups working for neighborhood and community improvement:

Encouragement of home ownership and assistance with purchase and upkeep of homes are high on the list of objectives of the United States Savings and Loan League.

Organized in 1892, the League currently has more than 4,300 member associations representing more than 90% of the industry's total assets. The membership is composed of both large and small institutions, in towns as well as in the larger cities.

Its nation-wide activities are carried out by a staff of 120 persons who provide a continuous flow of services to member institutions. This includes legislative representation (a separate full-time staff is maintained in Washington), legal direction and guidance, advertising and public relations counseling, and research.

Has Many Objectives

In addition to providing loans for home purchase, upkeep, and repair, the League's objectives include the encouragement of private enterprise; devising and fostering safe methods of conducting the business of savings and loan associations, and the improvement of regulations affecting the business.

To encourage individual home ownership, the League's Housing and Urban Rehabilitation Committee sponsors forum meetings on urban renewal and rehabilitation. It provides its members with current research material and information on slum clearance, rehabilitation and conservation programs. This committee is sponsoring the preparation of a Manual on Urban Renewal, for the guidance of savings and loan associations and cooperative banks. The manual will be presented at the League's Annual Convention in Chicago in November.

"News" Published Monthly

The Savings & Loan News, the League's monthly trade publication, has carried articles on the activities of individual savings and loan associations in the field of urban renewal. The organization also issues publications containing information on industry practices, techniques, management, and current savings and housing trends.

For further information write to W. C. Warman, staff vice-president, U. S. Savings & Loan League, 221 North LaSalle Street, Chicago 1.

City by City

EVERETT, MASS. — A Citizen's Advisory Committee for Community Conservation appointed here recently consists of 25 prominent local citizens selected by the mayor, board of aldermen, chamber of commerce, clergy, and labor. Each category chose five representatives to cooperate and work with elected city officials, department heads, and other civic groups.

DES MOINES, IOWA — The mayor has proclaimed September "Redevelopment and Planning Month." A permanent Citizens' Advisory Committee, composed of representatives from business, churches, unions, and the professions, has been named by the city manager.

CINCINNATI — The Cincinnati Telephone Company's BULLETIN, a house organ to employees throughout Ohio, devoted two pages of a recent issue to the activities of employees in citizen urban renewal organizations. Company employees were referred to ACTION as "the national organization that helps citizens better their neighborhoods."

EVANSTON, ILL. — The Loyola Improvement Association used a national holiday to combine the traditional July 4 community gathering with a clean-up project. The announcement offering "Refreshment for the Children" also invited area residents to "Bring Rakes and Shovels." Tyler Williams, ACTION Group Correspondent, used the occasion to distribute 350 copies of the "You and Your Neighborhood" booklet he had obtained through ACTION's special distribution plan, open to similar groups.

Challenge of Roads to Urban Regions Studied

ACTION representatives from the fields of industry, banking, housing, education, and research are attending the symposium, "The New Highways: Challenge to the Metropolitan Region," in Hartford, Conn., September 9-12.

Sponsored by the Connecticut General Life Insurance Co., the symposium will discuss the impact of the Federal highway program on the future economic and cultural growth of metropolitan areas.

ACTION Board members attending are Andrew Heiskell, Board chairman, who is publisher of LIFE Magazine; Roy W. Johnson, ACTION President, who is executive vice president of the General Electric Company; Philip M. Klutznick, president, American Community Builders, Inc., Chicago, and James W. Rouse, president of the James W. Rouse Co., Inc., Baltimore.

ACTION's staff representation includes James E. Lash, executive vice president; Martin Meyerson, research vice president; Robert Foeller, technical manager, and Alfred Kammerer, film consultant.

CITIZENS IN action

How Citizens Work Together To Improve Urban Living Stressed In Fall Ad Drive

To provide impetus for local urban renewal efforts is the objective of the Fall national advertising campaign being launched on behalf of ACTION by The Advertising Council. This is the third consecutive year the Council, with contribution of creative talent by Young & Rubicam, Inc., New York advertising agency, is sponsoring the ACTION program in the continuing and expanding fight against blight in urban areas.

The Fall drive again includes advertisements in America's daily newspapers and magazines, as well as announcements over television and radio and ads in company house organs. All will stress the importance of citizen participation and emphatically underscore the "what-you-can-do" approach.

Again ACTION is inviting the hundreds of organizations and the thousands of individuals in contact with the national organization to help assure maximum success for the campaign. By taking these steps, ACTION points out, YOU and your associates in your community or neighborhood organization can help:

What You Can Do

Let your newspaper, television and radio people know you are interested in having the advertisements used. Tell them of the many people in your group who are working for the upgrading of urban living and who are behind the advertising campaign. Get as many people as you can to call your paper's editor and the radio and TV station managers.

When these communications media make use of the ads, write or telephone your appreciation.

Write ACTION for advertising materials to take to the media people. This will give you a good opportunity to establish or renew contacts.

The Fall campaign accentuates the positive. The newspaper ad, for example, is headed: "How to work with your neighbors to protect your home and community." Preceding this heading are these provocative questions: "Community crowded? Neighborhoods decaying? Housing deteriorating? Streets and utilities outdated? Schools and parks inadequate?"

Then the ad proceeds to the "if-others-can-do-it-so-can-you" approach:

(See "Ad Council," page 4)

Community crowded? Neighborhoods decaying? Housing deteriorating? Streets and Utilities outdated? Schools and Parks inadequate?

How to work with your neighbors to protect your home and community

In neighborhoods throughout the nation today, citizen groups by the score are tackling, and licking, the problems of modern community growth.

They are people just like you. They have found strength and success in numbers . . . by keeping their own homes in good condition . . . by encouraging others to do likewise . . . by joining with their neighbors in community improvement projects and thereby gaining better living conditions for all.

Keep up your home—work with your neighbors

Better living conditions interest everyone. They are easier to obtain when neighbors join forces. You gain many personal benefits by keeping up your own home, then joining or starting a local community improvement group.

Talk with your friends, local business leaders, neighbors. Discuss this message with them. If community conditions need correction, *get together to get things done.* Get the facts, set practical goals and act.

Your group might begin by undertaking special neighborhood projects: clean-up campaigns, street or sidewalk repairs, gaining and upholding better housing and zoning laws. Today you might want improved garbage collections. Tomorrow your group could spearhead a combined community conservation, rehabilitation and slum-clearance program. Many local groups have begun and gone from success to success in such a way.

ACTION and many local agencies can assist you

Cooperation is the key to success. You will find many other local groups and agencies ready to support your efforts. Work with the many existing private groups. Talk to your city, county or state officials. They can help you—your group can help *them.* The widest possible participation yields the greatest possible results.

Take time to read carefully the points at right. Use them as a basic organization and operating guide, discuss them with your neighbors. For further information, write ACTION—the American Council To Improve Our Neighborhoods.

A national citizen organization dedicated to home and neighborhood improvement, ACTION has already aided hundreds of local community groups. It can help yours by sending you suggestions, ideas and success stories on how other community improvement groups began, what they have accomplished, and how they did it.

Fill in the coupon below today. You will receive the following informative booklets and reports:

1. Time for ACTION
2. The ACTION Publication's Catalogue
3. The ACTION Reporter, a monthly newsletter

If you need information on any specific home-improvement or group project, write a letter explaining the exact situation to ACTION.

How to conduct a successful group

1. Organize systematic methods for getting the facts—household surveys, meetings with key officials, use of outside expert advice.
2. Make the facts known. Present them to the people, your civic leaders, the local officialdom.
3. Look for opportunities to work with other local groups and official agencies.
4. Plan practical long-range and short-range objectives—each with a concrete beginning, middle and end.
5. Maintain a continuing program. Vary it. Make membership count. Keep it representative of the community.

Some things your group can do

1. Keep up your own homes, encourage others by sharing your experiences on housing improvement with them.
2. Organize neighborhood and block groups to handle their own planning and neighborhood problems.
3. Undertake special neighborhood projects: clean-up campaigns, planting trees, converting vacant lots into pleasant playgrounds.
4. Be the "watchdog" on city services and facilities, guard against violations of housing or zoning codes.
5. Publicize community improvement projects and successes, maintain contact with national groups such as ACTION.
6. Hold periodic Community Conferences, invite civic officials to explain local laws and answer neighborhood questions.

GOOD NEIGHBORHOODS ARE OUR NATION'S STRENGTH

ACTION

American Council To Improve Our Neighborhoods

For Group Organization kit, use this coupon

ACTION:
American Council To Improve Our Neighborhoods
Box 462, Radio City Station, New York 20, N. Y.

Please send me the special ACTION material that will help me organize, join or conduct a Community Improvement Group.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____

Organization (if any) _____

This advertisement stressing the "how-to" of working with neighborhood organizations is being sent to 1,768 daily newspapers by The Advertising Council as part of its Fall campaign on behalf of ACTION. Aiding local programs is the campaign's purpose.

"Ad Council"

(Continued from page 3)

"In neighborhoods throughout the nation today, citizen groups by the score are tackling, and licking, the problems of modern community growth. They are people just like you. They have found strength and success in numbers . . . by keeping their own homes in good condition . . . by joining with their neighbors in community improvement projects and gaining better living conditions for all."

Cooperation Called Key

Calling cooperation the "key to success," the ad points out that better living conditions are easier to obtain when neighbors join forces. Undertaking special neighborhood projects, such as clean-up campaigns, street or sidewalk repairs, gaining and upholding better housing and zoning laws, are called a good way to begin group action.

"ACTION and many local agencies can assist you," the ad states, and advises working with "the many existing private groups" and with city, county, state officials, because "the widest possible participation yields the greatest possible results."

Local Aid Stressed

The campaign is especially designed to improve the climate for promulgation of local programs. To stimulate interest in local efforts, the ads emphasize that while today's initial undertaking by a citizen group may be a minor one, "*tomorrow your group could spearhead a combined community conservation, rehabilitation, and slum-clearance program.*"

In the printed advertisements, a box offers suggestions on "How to conduct a successful group" and "Some things your group can do."

Here are the "how-to" suggestions:

"Organize systematic methods for getting the facts . . . household surveys, meetings with key officials, use of outside expert advice.

"Make the facts known. Present them to the people, your civic leaders, the local authorities.

"Look for opportunities to work with other local groups, official agencies.

"Plan practical long-range and short-range objectives . . . each with a concrete beginning, middle and end.

"Maintain a continuing program. Vary it. Make membership easy, representative of the community."

What Groups Can Do

The list of things to do suggests:

"Keep up your own homes, encourage others by sharing your experience on housing improvement with them.

"Organize neighborhood and block groups to handle their own housing and neighborhood problems.

"Undertake special neighborhood projects; clean-up campaigns, planting trees, converting vacant lots into pleasant playgrounds.

"Be the 'watchdog' on city services and facilities, guard against violations of housing and zoning codes.

"Publicize community improvement projects and successes, maintain contact with national groups such as ACTION.

"Hold periodic Community Conferences, invite officials to explain laws and answer neighborhood questions."

The important role played by television and radio in the national ACTION advertising campaign is illustrated in this drawing. Millions will see and hear announcements focusing attention on local citizen organizations and the programs they are supporting. Both radio and TV ads will urge listeners to "get together to get things done," to "join or start a community improvement group," and to participate actively.

ACTION

American Council To Improve Our Neighborhoods

Box 462, Radio City Station, New York 20, N. Y.

Stanley B. Winters, Pres.
26 Shanley Ave.
Newark, N. J. D